

Section 23 – Meeting notes: #4

Residences – May 9, 2007

Members Present: Rich Kramer (Chair), Gladys Morton, Bob Cudahy, Gloria Bogen, Tim Griffin, Monte Hilleman, Keith Jans, Dick Nowlin, Jeff Ochs, Chuck Repke, and Dede Wolfson.

Members Absent: Kevin Flynn, Lori Fritts, Ed Johnson, Lorrie Louder, Eric Mitchell and David Stokes.

Staff: Penny Simison, Larry Soderholm, Sheri Pemberton, Matt Smith, Yang Zhang, Cecile Bedor and Andrew Jacobson.

Resource people: Jim Solem formerly of CURA and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency; Gretchen Nicholls, executive director of the Center for Neighborhoods and its Corridor Housing Initiative.

1. **Welcome** by Rich Kramer
2. **Introduction** by Rich Kramer and Penny Simison. The meeting revolved around housing and housing in the Central Corridor. Simison stressed that the goal of the meeting is to develop a framework that will guide Saint Paul's land use decisions by revising, replacing or keeping current land use policies.
3. **Light Rail Transit**
 - Central Corridor
 - The Central Corridor Development Strategy predicts between 11,000 and 14,000 new housing units between 2010 and 2030. This is a large estimate but one that many suspect to be true.
 - With the vast investment and projected development in the Central Corridor, other corridors wonder how they fit in and how they will coexist.
 - Suggestion that the City should be bold with new development, be clear in City's objectives and keep an affordable variety of homes into the future.
 - Who will live in the Central Corridor? What is the market reality? What will happen to the current residents along the line in the areas of change?
 - The City should not abandon the University Ave. single family neighborhoods.
 - Senior housing will be a good option along the line although safety and convenience will be important as well.
 - Some predict that it will be tough to assemble land parcels for development.
 - Central Corridor will be an excellent place to encourage density.
 - Possibly encourage PUD (planned unit development) at transit intersections by speeding up the approval process.
 - Central Corridor is a consensus huge opportunity.
 - Hiawatha Corridor
 - No comprehensive plan was created for the Hiawatha light rail and therefore, development around the line has been piecemeal and fragmented.
 - The line doesn't complement the current neighborhoods or commercial areas very well.
4. **Neighborhoods**
 - River corridor and Central Corridor are engines of growth.
 - A strong neighborhood is an attractive one (schools play important roles too).
 - Transportation costs are rising, the City should emphasize benefits of city-living.
 - The City should help find solutions to move elderly into neighborhood senior housing to free up their homes to sell to younger families.
 - Can tighter enforcement help control absentee landlords from allowing the growing problem of nuisance housing?

- General concern among neighborhoods about neighborhood turnover, loss of single family communities.
- How can we better involve immigrants in our community and political process?

5. **Observations**

- City of Saint Paul
 - What does the small number of single family and duplex units built during Housing 5000 indicate about the City?
 - The City is trying to figure out the fiscal impacts of land use and tax base and the change in tax base when shifting from one land use to another.
 - The City needs to preserve room for job growth.
 - The 35,000 new units projected for the City by 2030 will require a definite change in land use. GIS and GoogleEarth can help estimate where new housing can go.
- A desire for 21st century planning
 - Shared information and good technology (ex. GIS) are important.
 - Visualizing density tools are beneficial when doing projects (using local projects are also helpful).
 - Increased use of technology and fiscal analysis tools will better inform our decisions.
- Need for enough affordable units into the future and the city and other levels of government will no longer be able to finance all of them.
 - What is considered 'affordable?' – Several definitions but one is that no more than 30% of income goes towards housing costs (which include property taxes).
- Demographic mix and trends in family size are important.
- The Twin Cities is a unique region with two downtowns and two sets of neighborhoods. The downtowns compete with each other but more importantly, we have a strong regional economy. The vivacity and variety of our area are lures for new development.
- Development should be sensitive to and reaffirm a community's history and identity.
- In some cases, change can help preserve the character of a neighborhood.
- Aging population will want to be on transit corridors.
- Important to think creatively to adapt existing housing supply to the market.
- Will the fix-up housing market dry up? Has it already?
- People will walk longer to get to a train than a bus (generally up to a half mile).
- The City can influence how walkable a neighborhood is.
- New industries are generally value-added or R & D which, with the application of good design standards, can be integrated with housing.

6. **Comments on current land use policy, comparisons and suggestions for new policy.**

- Comments on current policy
 - Processes can be expedited.
- Comparison
 - Portland can place houses and development in challenging locations because of improved design standards. Therefore, design standards are crucial in infill development.
- Suggestions for new policy
 - Variety and mixture in housing options is critical.
 - The City needs to set clear requirements/objectives for development.
 - Most important lure for developers is an efficient approval process.
 - The City needs a strong strategy to address older neighborhoods characteristics.

7. **Wrap up** and closing by Simison.

Meeting ended at 7:10 pm.